

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF THE
TOWN OF HAMILTON
FOR THE
Year ending March, 1873.

SALEM :
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1873.



REPORT.

The School Committee for the year ending March, 1873, present the following Report of the condition and progress of the schools for the past year:

The amount raised by the town for the support of schools at the meeting, March, 1872, was \$1000. To this was added amount received from Massachusetts School Fund, \$125.14; dog licenses, \$54.35; making an amount of \$1179.49, to be expended for the support of schools, in the payment of teachers, providing fuel and taking care of school houses; this amount has been expended by the Committee as follows, viz. for:—

NORTH SCHOOL.

Wages of teacher in Summer	\$106 25
“ “ “ Winter,	175 00
Fuel and care of school house,	30 50 — \$311 75

SOUTH SCHOOL.

Wages of teacher in Summer,	\$106 25
“ “ “ Winter,	165 00
Fuel and care of school-house,	40 50 — \$311 75

EAST SCHOOL.

Wages of teacher for Summer,	\$106 25
“ “ “ Winter,	157 50
Wood and care of house,	24 00 — \$287 75

WEST SCHOOL.

Wages of teacher for Summer,	\$106 25
“ “ “ Winter,	131 25
Fuel and care of house,	29 50 — \$267 00

Total expenditures,	<u>\$1178 25</u>
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The statistics of the schools as obtained from the registers, are as follows:—

SOUTH SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss SOPHIA F. LOVERING, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months; wages per month, \$25.00; whole number of scholars, 32; average attendance, 26; Fannie E. Patch and Carrie P. Rust, were present every day.

Winter Term. Mr. A. L. McMILLAN, Teacher. Length of term, 3 months; wages per month, \$55.00; whole number of scholars, 36; average attendance 29.

WEST SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss E. T. ELLINGWOOD, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months; wages per month, \$25.00; whole number of scholars, 25; average attendance, 18 1-2.

Winter Term. The same teacher. Length of term, 3 1-2 months; wages per month, \$37.50; whole number of scholars, 22; average attendance, 12 6-7; perfect in attendance, C. Lizzie Edwards.

NORTH SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss LYDIA A. DANE, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months; wages per month, \$25.00; whole number of scholars, 29; average attendance, 20; perfect in attendance, Leverett W. Dane.

Winter Term. Mr. THOMAS E. CRAMER, Teacher. Length of term, 3 months; wages per month, \$58.33; whole number of scholars, 34; average attendance, 27.

EAST SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss LAURA S. WOODBURY, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months; wages per month, \$25.00; whole number of scholars, 26; average attendance, 21; perfect in attendance, Lottie W. Whipple, Nellie P. Knowlton, Annie L. Whipple.

Winter Term. Miss R. F. PRIEST, Teacher. Length of term, 3 3-4 months; wages per month, \$42.00; whole number of scholars, 33; average attendance, 27 1-4.

The average length of our schools for the past year has been 7 9-16 months, that of the South and West being 7 1-4 months, of the West 7 3-4 months, and of the East, 8 months.

These brief and bald statistics of course fail to give any idea of the real condition and progress of our schools, and we feel it our duty to add to these, some further information in regard to their prosperity. The Summer schools were all satisfactory to the Committee; three of the teachers are residents of our town and have had so much experience in our schools in previous years, that we all know what manner of teachers they are, and it will be sufficient to say that their previous good reputation suffered no detriment. They knew their schools and their schools knew them, and there was not that necessity for feeling their way during the early part of the term, which new teachers experience. Miss Ellingwood gave so good satisfaction to the Committee, in her Summer Term, and her school made so good an appearance at the final examination that we were induced to engage her at that time for the Winter Term, expecting that the school

would be so small and the pupils so young, that it would be easily controlled and instructed by her.

For our Winter schools, in the North and South districts, we obtained two gentlemen who proved to be admirably adapted to their work. It was the expressed opinion of the Committee, in which all seemed to coincide, that no better schools had been kept in these districts for a long time. Mr. Cramer seemed to be peculiarly successful in gaining the good will and sympathy of both parents and scholars at the start, and this aided him in carrying his school forward in their studies. All the exercises at the examination were highly creditable; the classes in Arithmetic were especially deserving of favorable notice. A small class in Algebra had made a good start. As a token of their kind feeling, his scholars purchased for him an illustrated bible, which was presented to him on their behalf, with appropriate remarks, by W. J. Dane.

The South School was kept in good discipline and active in study by Mr. McMillan's energetic management. The scholars were kept on the alert, and there was no opportunity given for lounging or sleeping. At the final examination the Reading received the warmest commendations of those present; there had evidently been great effort made by the teacher to secure force and expression in this exercise. The discipline was excellent. The exits and entrances of the school were orderly and almost noiseless, within the limits of the school-room. We regret that the writing did not receive the attention it deserved; we are of the opinion that nothing worth mentioning was accomplished in that branch.

Miss Priest in the East district found it an arduous task to carry her school successfully through

the long term, but she did it with honor to herself and great benefit to her charge. Her faithful and conscientious labor was rewarded by a very excellent examination. The various classes were prompt and correct in recitation.

So far as we could see on visiting Miss Ellingwood's school, the discipline and mode of instruction seemed commendable, but the school tapered off in numbers till but about nine were left to tell the tale of their labors at the examination; the distance at which many of the children live from the school-house, together with the bad travelling, probably was the occasion in part of this decline; but it would also seem that the teacher failed to possess the confidence of some of the parents, so that children were detained at home more than was necessary; we think that the withdrawal of children from school by their parents, in case of dissatisfaction, is not the best mode of meeting the difficulty; at least this remedy should not be resorted to until the causes of complaint have been properly laid before the Committee, and it appears that they will not take any action to improve the management of the school, in case any should be needed.

Taking our schools as a whole, they have for the past year been very successful, and much has been accomplished as we have reason to expect under our present system, and with our present appropriation.

The statutes provide that the School Committee shall in their Annual Report make such suggestions in regard to the schools as they deem necessary or proper. One of these suggestions is, that older children should not be in so much haste to quit attending our schools. We are satisfied that there are many who have ceased to be pupils, who have not mastered those

branches which are included in the common course of study,—that there are many who have abandoned school too early in life for their advantage. From a comparison of the statistics of our recent schools with those of twenty years since, we are inclined to the opinion that this indisposition of our older children to remain in school has increased of late. From the report made to the town in March, 1850, which is the earliest printed report which we have seen, we learn that the falling off in the number of scholars in the South School for the Summer has been but 10 per cent.; for the Winter it is 42 per cent. In the number of scholars in the West School, the falling off has been for the Summer, 39 per cent; for the Winter, 58 per cent. In the North School the number of scholars for the Summer has increased, since 1849, about 3 per cent., while in the winter it has declined 30 per cent. In the East School, the whole number of scholars for the Summer, is the same as in 1849; and for the Winter it has increased about 22 per cent. From these statistics it would appear that the decline in the attendance in our schools, has been greater among the older scholars, who generally attend the Winter schools.

The subject of prompt and regular attendance has been so frequently brought to your attention by Committees, that nothing but the conviction that it still exists as a great evil, which can to some extent be remedied, would induce us to allude to it in this report.

In the North School, as it appears by the register, there were 470 tardinesses. The teacher of this school in explanation of this exhibit, stated that he had been more exact in noting tardiness than teachers generally

are, it being generally considered that if scholars came in within a certain time after the opening of the school, say five minutes, they should not be marked tardy; that is, that tardiness, up to a certain extent, should be regarded and treated as punctuality; we cannot say how this is, but are of the opinion that any such system that provided for systematic tardiness would be a vicious one.

For the remedy of this evil we must invoke the assistance of parents. A habit of being tardy is bad for the school, and especially bad in its influence upon the children who are suffered to form it. Such will be likely to be lagging and behindhand in the duties of life. The School Committee of the year 1869, adopted a set of rules for the administration of the schools, one of which was:—

“Punctual and regular attendance shall be required of every scholar. Any one absent or tardy shall be required to present a written excuse from parent or guardian; and if any scholar shall be guilty of absence or tardiness for three times without such excuse, he shall be reported to the committee as guilty of disorderly conduct. No one shall be excused before the close of the session of school without such written excuse. All the written excuses shall be kept on file by the teacher for the inspection of the committee.”

This rule was not strictly enforced in the last year, but we would recommend that it be insisted on in the management of the school for the coming year.

The school houses are in good condition, and it would appear that no large expenditure would be required on any one of them for the next year.

In closing this report we have only to say that while we cannot expect much more to be attained by our schools under the present system of four ungraded schools, we ought not to be satisfied until we have a grammar school for the more advanced scholars, which shall be kept at least 36 weeks, leaving the others as primary schools to be kept for the entire year by female teachers. For this, however, a larger appropriation would be needed; but we hope that before long the town will take the steps necessary for this improvement. In the mean time we urge all to a deeper interest in the schools as they are, and to throw all their influence to promote their prosperity.

DAN'L E. SAFFORD, }
JARVIS LAMSON, }
ASAHEL H. PATCH, } Committee.

Hamilton, March, 1873.